

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

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1. (Currently amended) A method for a pre-treatment of chips, comprising:
  - exposing the chips to an acidic treatment device by adding an acidic treatment fluid to establish an acidic slurry having a fluid fraction exceeding 50%;
  - draining the chips from the acidic slurry so that the drained chips obtain a remaining free acidic fluid fraction surrounding the chips that does not exceed 10% by volume excluding any chip moisture disposed inside the chips;
  - heating the drained acidic slurry to a temperature exceeding 20° C;
  - recycling the drained acidic slurry to the acidic treatment device;
  - adding additional acidic treatment fluid to the acidic treatment device only in a replacement amount that corresponds to an amount of acidic fluid that is retained in the drained chips;
  - heating the drained chips by steam to a first temperature; and heating the drained chips to a second temperature not exceeding 140° C while adding an alkali impregnation liquid, the second temperature being higher than the first temperature.
2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating of the chips essentially takes place by an addition of warm alkali impregnation fluid.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2 wherein the addition of the warm alkali impregnation fluid takes place in a vessel in which a flow of alkali impregnation fluid is formed in the vessel that flows in an opposite direction to a flow of the chips.

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4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating of the chips takes place through an addition of ~~steam~~ steam to the chips in at least one step, after which the 10 chips that have been heated with steam are formed into a slurry with the alkali impregnation fluid.

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5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the acidic treatment fluid has a pH that does not exceed 4-5 and the acidic treatment fluid is added to a treatment vessel in an amount for replacement that corresponds to an amount that accompanies the chips to a subsequent heating by steam.

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6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5 wherein no continuous withdrawal of acidic treatment fluid takes place from the treatment vessel in excess of a loss of acidic treatment fluid that accompanies the chips.

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7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a sulphide-rich liquor.

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8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 7 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a mixture of at least one of sulphide-rich white liquor, sulphide-rich black liquor and/or sulphide-rich green liquor, and where the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of  $\text{HS}^-$  that exceeds 0.15 mol/liter.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 8 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of NaOH that does not exceed 0.75 mol/liter.

5    10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein a formation of a slurry of the chips in the acidic treatment fluid takes place during a period of 1-20 minutes.

10    11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 10 wherein the acidic treatment fluid in a vessel is subject to an external flow against a heat exchanger ~~for heating the acidic treatment fluid to a temperature that exceeds 20 °C while not exceeding 80 °C.~~

15    12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the chips are heated with steam in at least one step to a temperature in a range of 80-120 °C.